

Marc Camille Chaimowicz’s pluralistic practice encompasses painting, drawing, collage, book making, sculpture, and installation as well as ceramics, furniture, lighting, textiles, and wallpaper. He emerged as an artist in the early 1970s with groundbreaking performative installations that infused everyday life with art and politics and stood at the intersection of the gay liberation and feminist movements. In the years that followed, he moved his artistic activities into his home, an inward turn that is the starting point for *Your Place or Mine* This slyly provocative title positions the exhibition as a temporary connection between visitor and artist, who extends an invitation to enter his world.

Chaimowicz’s artworks, made between 1978 and the present, are arranged to evoke a series of places: a home, library, and park. In these spaces, interiority and conviviality, private contemplation and sociability are commingled, at odds, and in flux. He challenges dichotomies, pivoting between fine art and design, public and private, masculine and feminine, past and present.

The Jewish Museum building was originally a family home. Its once-lived-in rooms, with their ornamental flourishes, offer the perfect setting for an artist preoccupied with the psychological, imaginative dimensions of domestic spaces, objects, and rituals. These act as source and subject of his work, which brings value to decoration, intimacy, and the interior life of the artist.

Chaimowicz was born in postwar Paris. His Polish Jewish father, a mathematician at the Institut Curie, survived the Nazi Occupation of France, but never spoke of that time. His French Catholic mother was a seamstress for the couturier Pacin. In pursuit of new beginnings, the family moved to England when Chaimowicz was eight years old, eventually settling in London. He finally returned to Paris in May 1968 to witness the student uprisings there, events that shaped his career. He enfolds his rebelliousness in beauty, one of many dualities that he fluidly negotiates and that resonates across his life and work.

Kelly Taxter

Associate Curator



LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE

The Library

Chaimowicz has created artist’s books throughout his career, starting with the modest 1977 publication *Dream . . . An Anecdote*. Feeling homesick, its narrator recounts a nightmare: his home, a “shelter from the external world,” is ransacked while he is traveling. When the tale ends, the author’s voice abruptly switches to the third person. This is a typical move by an artist who revels in confusions between author and character, documentarian and storyteller. In 1985, he published *Café du Rêve*, equal parts travelogue, diary, and love letter. “Le Désert,” the first of its seven chapters, introduces a narrator / subject who meditates on the effects of prolonged isolation.

In the years that followed, Chaimowicz continued to investigate interiority and the domestic and fashioned his living space into a total work of art. In 2006, the British decor magazine *World of Interiors* featured the artist and his home in its April issue. For him, the images in magazines, like his own objects, offer the opportunity for insight and “various possible fictions.” Pursuing this thought, Chaimowicz created a collage of every page. He divided these works into fifteen sections—with titles such as “Wallpapers and Carpets,” “Here and There . . .,” “Jean Cocteau, a Provisional Interior,” and “Madame Bovary”—that stealthily reveal his many projects and influences.

LE SALON

The Salon

Chaimowicz has always been interested in the play of discourse and collaboration within his practice. Le Salon simultaneously represents the artist’s lounge, an area for display, and a staged space in which to receive and confront visitors. Here, the customary roles of guest and host intermingle, and hospitality takes on a sensual charge.

The central work, *North*, appears to be a remnant of an event that has just ended, perhaps a long phone call at day’s end to a lover, conducted while luxuriously supine in the soft light. Chaimowicz’s forms and titles often conjure a spectral presence and allude to intimate encounters—and their attendant implications.

Projects like *Vasque*, a newly commissioned wallpaper, require more traditional collaboration with artisans and craftspeople. Chaimowicz surrenders to the complications of these partnerships, to the differences of interpretation and the impact of practicality that are revealed during the process of turning an idea into a realized object. He states that design diverges from fine art in that “it is not so much for myself and the other, not so much *pour toi, de moi*,” for you, from me, but “*de nous, pour vous*,” from us, for you all.



LE JARDIN PUBLIQUE

The Public Garden

In these galleries lined by windows, the full breadth of Chaimowicz’s production is displayed on and around curvilinear platforms, which are inspired by the sinuous pathways of Central Park across the street. Objects are arranged in vignettes meant to inspire meandering. Viewers are encouraged to bring their own perspectives and desires to the experience of the exhibition: to walk through, to linger and double back. Such is the particular nature of walking in a public park, where one may set out on a path but is easily diverted by daydreams and the unexpected.

Chaimowicz’s works have never been straightforward. *Dual* can be oriented for sitting or reclining; *Laura Street, for Georgy* can be used as a screen or display shelf or appreciated as a painting or inlaid woodwork; the form of *Desk on Decline* resists its function, standing drastically tipped on one leg. Each of these design-based sculptural objects ranges from the subtly fanciful to the outright improbable, keeping one foot in the fantastical and fictive. Here, as throughout the exhibition, Chaimowicz’s many dialogues—between fine and applied arts, fantasy and reality, public and private—are purposefully merged.



Marc Camille Chaimowicz: Your Place or Mine . . .

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Complimentary audio guide players are also available for loan at the admission desk in the museum lobby, except on Saturdays and some Jewish holidays.

For the comfort of all visitors, headphones must be used in the galleries.

A printed family guide is available at the admission desk in the museum lobby.

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#MarcCamilleChaimowicz

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